FOOD IN THE CITY

Where can we grow?

A process to assess land suitable for urban agriculture.

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Springfield, Massachusetts

- Population 153,552 (US Census 2012)
- 34.6% of residents below poverty level (ACS 2009)
- 44.5% percent of households are food-insecure (FRAC 2010)
Vacancy – not just an eyesore.
Springfield Food Policy Council (2010)

→ Oversees public and private efforts to improve *food security*

→ Has diverse representation in membership - farmers, distributors, health care, residents, non-profit organizations, municipal departments

Urban Agriculture Committee (2010 after SFPC)

→ Advocate for policies that create opportunities and infrastructure for people to grow their own food

→ Identified vacant lots as an opportunity for urban agriculture
How do we know where we can grow?

Where is urban agriculture permitted?

Is the soil contaminated?

Which neighborhoods need a community garden?

Who will benefit?

Is it the “right” site?

How can I access vacant land?

Will the garden be accessible to the community?
Stakeholder Input

Community Meeting, February 2014
Scope of the Assessment

- Community Gardens
- Commercial Farms
- Community & Youth Farms
- Urban Orchards
In January 2014 there were over 500 vacant lots in Springfield.
Tiered Results

GOOD

➔ Tier 1 criteria focus on the immediate and neighborhood conditions of the site.

BETTER

➔ Tier 2 criteria also relate to neighborhood conditions for which mappable data was not available.

BEST

➔ Tier 3 criteria relate individual vacant lots to broad, city-wide considerations.
Assumptions

✓ All sites that met the Tier 1 criteria may be suitable for urban agriculture.

✓ If not identified as hazardous, soils are suitable for agriculture.

✓ City water can be accessed from every site and is suitable to use to grow food.

✓ Adequate sun is available.
Ground Truthing

✓ Street width
✓ Vehicular traffic
✓ Fencing
✓ Surrounding buildings and existing vegetation
✓ Soil should be tested or use raised beds
Raster Analysis

✓ Datalayers obtained
✓ Polygons created
✓ Merge to Springfield boundary
✓ Convert to Raster
✓ Reclassify
Criteria for Community Gardens

Tier 1a Criteria
- < 5000 SQ FT
- < 5 % Slope
- Not Zoned Commercial P
- Not Hazardous
- Not a Flood Zone
- Not a Wetland
- Not Priority Habitat
- Permeable Surface
- City-owned Vacant Lot

Tier 1b Criteria
- Adjacent Vacant Lot
- Corner Lot
- Near Gardens
- Near Centers of Community

Tier 2 Criteria
- High Renter Density
- Sidewalks along site

Tier 3 Criteria
- Environmental Justice
- Proximity to Parks
- Food Deserts

Ground-Truthing
Priority Sites Identified

Tiers of criteria used to evaluate community gardens.
Criteria for Community Gardens

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- < 5000 SQ FT
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Ground-Truthing
Priority Sites Identified

Tiers of criteria used to evaluate community gardens.
Tier 1 = 27 parcels
Criteria for Community Gardens

Tier 1a Criteria
- < 5000 SQ FT
- < 5 % Slope
- Not Zoned Commercial P
- Not Hazardous
- Not a Flood Zone
- Not a Wetland
- Not Priority Habitat
- Permeable Surface
- City-owned Vacant Lot

Tier 1b Criteria
- Adjacent Vacant Lot
- Corner Lot
- Near Gardens
- Near Centers of Community

Tier 2 Criteria
- High Renter Density
- Sidewalks along site

Tier 3 Criteria
- Environmental Justice
- Proximity to Parks
- Food Deserts

Ground-Truthing

Priority Sites Identified

Tiers of criteria used to evaluate community gardens.
Tier 2 = 6 parcels
Criteria for Community Gardens

Tier 1a Criteria
- < 5000 SQ FT
- < 5% Slope
- Not Zoned Commercial P
- Not Hazardous
- Not a Flood Zone
- Not a Wetland
- Not Priority Habitat
- Permeable Surface
- City-owned Vacant Lot

Tier 1b Criteria
- Adjacent Vacant Lot
- Corner Lot
- Near Gardens
- Near Centers of Community

Tier 2 Criteria
- High Renter Density
- Sidewalks along site

Tier 3 Criteria
- Environmental Justice
- Proximity to Parks
- Food Deserts

Ground-Truthing
Priority Sites Identified

Tiers of criteria used to evaluate community gardens.
Tier 3 – Environmental Justice
Tier 3 – Food Deserts
Tier 3 – Parks and Open Space
## Community Garden Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiers</th>
<th>Parcels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1a</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1b</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### GROUND TRUTHING OBSERVATIONS

- sits on a narrow two-way road
- existing split-rail fence surrounds the property
- lot “cleaned and greened”
- some tree debris on the property will need to be cleared
- good solar access
- trees and scrub to the east of the property
Urban Agriculture Committee: Strategic Planning

Short Term Goals:

➔ Prioritize a robust community garden network

➔ Expand the capacity of Gardening the Community

Long Term Goals:

➔ Land Tenure
Currently in Springfield

Community Gardening Ordinance (2012)

➔ Encourages citizen engagement in urban agriculture,

➔ Acknowledges the benefits of urban agriculture, and

➔ Permits people to petition to temporarily use vacant lots for urban agriculture.

Hen Ordinance

➔ Will be introduced into the discussion this year
Defining Success

Municipal Support

- Passing additional ordinances to ease implementation
- Water access

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

- Awarded grant dollars for infrastructure

Private sector support

- Currently a missing component
FOOD IN THE CITY

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Find the full report on ISSUU
http://issuu.com/conwaydesign